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# Explaining men and women's housework participation in Mexico

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## Resumen

Este artículo explora la relación entre la incorporación de las mujeres al mercado de trabajo y la participación de hombres y mujeres en el trabajo doméstico en México. Para el análisis se emplea información proveniente de la Encuesta Nacional sobre la Dinámica de las Relaciones en los Hogares 2003. La determinación de los factores explicativos se lleva a cabo mediante regresiones lineales múltiples, empleando como variables dependientes los índices de participación en el trabajo doméstico de hombres y mujeres. Los resultados indicaron que los factores más relevantes para explicar el trabajo doméstico femenino son su nivel de poder de decisión, como factor que incrementa su carga de trabajo en el hogar, y la presencia de una empleada doméstica, como factor que reduce dicho trabajo. Para los hombres, los factores más explicativos son los años de escolaridad y el trabajo extradoméstico de la mujer, como factores que propician una mayor participación, así como la presencia de una empleada doméstica y los años de unión como factores que disminuyen dicha participación.

*Palabras clave:* mercado de trabajo, trabajo doméstico, trabajo extradoméstico, hombres, mujeres, México.

## Introduction

To which extent is the participation in domestic work of men and women modified by the participation of the latter in labor market? To which extent can we think of the participation of men and women in domestic work as activities complementary to each other or as a complementary activity to their extra-domestic jobs?

## Abstract

*Explaining men and women's housework participation in Mexico*

This article explores the relation between the women's integration to labor market and the participation of men and women in housework in Mexico. For this analysis information from the National Survey on the Dynamics of the Households Dynamics 2003 (*Encuesta Nacional sobre la Dinámica de las Relaciones en los Hogares 2003*) is used. The definition of the explanatory factors is carried out by means of multiple linear regressions, using as dependent variables the indexes of participation in housework of men and women. The results indicated that the most relevant factors to explain feminine housework are their decision power level, as a factors which increments its workload at the household, and the presence of a housemaid, as a factor which reduces said workload. For men, the most explanatory factors are the schooling years and the women's work outside the household, as factors which propitiate a greater participation, as well as the presence of a housemaid and the years of union as factors which decrease such participation.

*Key words:* labor market, housework, extra-domestic work, men, women, Mexico.

Domestic work—all of the tasks and activities necessary for the maintenance and reproduction of the family and home—constitutes an important part of most people's quotidian life. In spite of the technologic advances, plenty of time is still needed to cook, do the washing, clean, do the shopping, care and raise children, elderly or sick people in the family, pay for the services of the household, repair and maintain appliances, et cetera. And most of these tasks are carried out by women (Huber and Spitze, 1983). Moreover, the woman who works outside the household is still responsible for most of this workload. The growing incorporation of women into the labor market has brought a conscience-awareness situation on this topic and the fairness of this situation has been questioned.

For long time it has been said that a married woman's job might lead to changes in the prevailing schema of task assignation, which supposes housewives as the main (or only) responsible for house chores and children's upbringing. A shared responsibility—between men and women—to provide the households with economic resources was expected to bring equality in the distribution of domestic work (Chant, 1991; Safa, 1990; De Barbieri, 1984); however, empiric findings do not support this assumption. In Mexico, as in any other country, the greater labor participation of women is not followed by changes in the pattern of power or evident changes in the division of domestic work (Benería and Roldán, 1987; Chant, 1991; García and Oliveira, 1994; Casique, 2000 and 2001).

In this work we aim to identify the factors which to a greatest extent influence and explain the level of participation of both men and women in domestic work. In addition to the relation that may be established between extra-domestic and domestic work, we are also interested in exploring the associations of a broader set of factors related to domestic work, such as individual characteristics, those of the union, of the empowerment level of the woman and the ideology of gender so as to be able to identify in each case, men's and women's, which the most determining factors of their participation in house chores are. And finally, when delimiting the explanatory model of domestic participation of men and women, it is sought to identify the similarities and dissimilarities in them observed.

To sum up, two are the central objectives of this work:

1. Identify the determining factors of participation of men and women in domestic work.
2. Establish the differences or similarities between the explanatory model that gives an account of the participation in domestic work of men and women.

## Theoretical frameworks on the division of domestic work

In this section we want to summarize what the theoretical propositions in the existing literature are to explain the level of participation of men and women in domestic work and its uneven distribution. Several theories have been proposed and empirically put to the test, yet none provides a satisfactory explanation, provable in different contexts and circumstances. Certainly, the theories that have clearly prevailed in recent researches on this topic are the theory of available time, the theory of resources and the theory of gender.

In the first place, diverse researchers have assumed a relation between the empowerment of woman and the apportionment of domestic work, assuming that that member of the couple with the most resources or power (understanding education, income and occupational category as resources that generate power) will perform fewer tasks (Huber and Spitze, 1983; Piotrowski and Repetti, 1984; Coverman, 1985; Ross, 1987; Brines, 1993; Presser, 1994; Pittman *et al.*, 1996). This approach or statement is known as 'the theory of resources' and has found partial empirical support for the effect of a woman's higher income (who would carry out less domestic work), however the relation is not linear but curved. The supposed relation of better schooling and a better occupational status and less domestic work has not found broad empirical support, generally speaking (Kroska, 2004). The greatest problem of this theory is that probably the supposition that resources have the same effect on domestic work of men and women.

On the other side, it has been stated that carrying out domestic labor is a function of the free time the individuals have and their capability to respond to tasks in the household (Blood and Wolf, 1960; South and Spitze, 1994; Silver and Goldscheider, 1994). Some authors have stated available time as another resource, in the category of resources, differencing that this very resource would not free that who possessed it from domestic work, but would bind them to it.

The third explanatory framework is that of the perspective of roles of gender, which focus the explanation of the distribution of domestic work on the socialized attitudes and on what is considered appropriate for men and women (Ferre, 1990; Ross, 1987; Berck, 1985; Fenstermaker, West and Zimmerman, 1991; South and Spitze, 1994). The proposed statement is that if the gender is the determinant with the most relevance of domestic work, then said domestic activities must be understood as a fundamental part of 'production of gender', from which being

masculine of feminine means (Kroska, 2000). Domestic work would either produce goods and services for the household as well as gender (Shelton and John, 1996).

A fourth explanation is offered by the model of the ideology of gender, which proposes that individuals with more liberal or egalitarian attitudes in respect to gender would have a more equitable division of domestic work than that between couples with more traditional visions of gender (Greenstein, 1996; Pittman and Blanchard, 1996; Huber and Spitze, 1983).

By and large, it is accepted that each of these theories provides a partial explanation. In our analysis we incorporate indicators that allow making the pertinence of each of these explanations in the Mexican case evident. Nonetheless, we start from the hypothesis that neither the same factors nor a single explanatory framework would allow us to approach the best explanation of the domestic work performed by men and women. This is to say, we presuppose a certain dependency between one and another behavior as for the most determinant factors in each case.

## **Data and methods**

For the development of this analysis, we use information from the 2003 National Survey on the Dynamics of the Relations at the Households (*Encuesta Nacional sobre la Dinámica de las Relaciones en los Hogares 2003, Endireh*). This survey gathers information on violence at the households, as well as diverse aspects of the familial dynamics, such as decision making and the division of domestic work. The final sample is representative for women above 25 years of age, married or living with their partner, with a total of 34184 surveyed women.

To determinate the explanatory factors of participation in domestic work of men and women multiple linear regressions are estimated, three for men and three for women, making use as dependent variables, alternately, the indexes of participation in domestic work of men and women. These indexes were estimated from the information included in Endireh on the participation of the different members of the household in carrying out five sorts of tasks: 1) domestic work, such as doing the washing, ironing, cooking; 2) care of children; 3) care of elderly people; 4) carry out diverse procedures (pay the bills, telephone, banks,

etc); 5) make repairs around the house.<sup>1</sup> Considering the frequency of participation of each individual in the diverse tasks (which is measured in Endireh with a 1-to-3 scale: 1, if the individuals only take part once in a while; 2, if they do it sometimes; 3, when they always do it), an indicator of the magnitude (or level) of participation of each of them is obtained. By means of factorial analysis, the participation of men and women in each of the five tasks is pondered and added onto a final index that represents the workload at the household that each of them performs. Annex 1 illustrates the calculation of the index of participation in domestic work of women and a more detailed explanation of the procedure has been presented in previous works (Casique, 2004). The calculation of the index of participation for men was exactly the same in procedure.

As explanatory variables of domestic work individual, couple and household indicators are included: age of woman and man (continuous variables), years of schooling of woman and man (continuous variables), condition of the man's activity (dichotomic variable, 1 if he does not work), condition of the woman's activity (dichotomic variable, 1 if she works),<sup>2</sup> hours of extra-domestic work of man and hours of extra-domestic work of woman (continuous variables), if the woman works at the weekend and if the man works at the weekend (dichotomic variables, 1 if they work at the weekend), socio-economic stratum of the household (categorical variable), free union (dichotomic variable, 1 if they live in free union), year of the union (continuous variable), presence of a housemaid (dichotomic variable, 1 if there is a housemaid), indicators of the woman's empowerment level (index of decision power and index of autonomy of the woman). These two additive indexes estimated, respectively, from the information collected by the survey on power of decision of women before a series of familial decisions in respect to their partners and their capability to carry out diverse activities without the authorization of their spouse.<sup>3</sup> Finally, an indicator of ideology of the women's role of gender is also included. The last variable is an

<sup>1</sup> Originally Endireh enquires on eight domestic tasks, yet three of them (firewood gathering, cleaning of pen and attention to the orchard or animals) are proper to the rural environment, so there is not information on this respect for 77 percent of the sample. Hence, the estimated index of participation in domestic work only considers the five common tasks to urban and rural households, in views of evaluating a common framework to all of the individuals.

<sup>2</sup> In previous works we have pointed out the importance of incorporating an exogenous indicator of the labor participation of women in order to avoid endogeneity problems (Casique, 2000). The available data from this analysis do not allow us to obtain here this exogenous indicator, so we include the direct indicator of extra-domestic work in the analysis, at the time we warn on the possible existence of this situation and on the incorporation of other alternate indicators, such as hours of work, and work at the weekend.

<sup>3</sup> Detailed information on the estimation of these two indexes can be found in Casique, 2004

index estimated from a series of questions included in the survey and referred to the role of women in their relation with their partners, which measures the degree of subordination of women before men, locating at the bottom those women more subordinated to the authority of men and at the top those who self-conceive in an egalitarian manner in relation to men.

Most of these variables here included as predictors of work at the household of men and women are stated in the available literature as relevant and significant factors. The only variables for which we have not found references on their relation to domestic work are those related to the empowerment of women: power of decision and autonomy of women. We incorporate said variables into the analysis because we consider they represent fundamental aspects of the participation of the individuals in domestic work and in order to help clarify the concrete meaning of the relation they exercise on the apportionment of domestic work.

It is worth mentioning that other variables which were included at first in our analysis, were later excluded from the final model due to their lack of statistical significance or because they were highly correlated to other indicators that were more relevant. This occurred with the number of children (a variable that was highly correlated to the years of the union) and two indicators related to extra-domestic work of women: the proportion of the income provided by the woman and whether the woman earned more than the man (which were not significant in any model whatsoever).

Finally, since the indicator estimated for the participation of men and women in domestic work does not include three tasks proper to the rural environment, we have decided not to include as explanatory variable in our analysis the rural or urban condition, since opting for a homogenous indicator of domestic work for all of the households we are underrating the value of domestic work of men and women in the rural environment, and a comparison between both environments in this context would not be correct.

The characteristics of the women from the analyzed sample are summarized in table 1.

## **Bi-varied analysis of conditionings of domestic work**

The first step in our analysis consisted of the estimation of an index of participation in domestic work for women and another for men. For women, the estimated index has a value of 0.73 (they are standardized indexes with values between zero and one) and an acceptable consistency, with a value for Cronbach's alpha of 0.70. The corresponding index for men has a value of 0.19 and a Cronbach's alpha of 0.87. These first data illustrate the already well-known inequitable participation of men and women in domestic work, participation that is mostly taken up by women.

In this part of the analysis we compare the values in these indexes of participation in domestic work of women and men (or load of domestic work) according to changes in the values of the explanatory variables. In the case of the independent dichotomic variables we used t-tests in order to verify if the changes that are observed in the values of participation in domestic work of women and men are statistically significant. In the case of the variables with more than two categories (or continuous), we employed variance analysis to, in a similar manner, verify the significance of the differences in participation. In the case of continuous variables three or four ranges of values for each one, which caused the stating of the same number of categories, so as to be able to perform this test.

Table 2 displays the results of t-tests; all the tests show significant differences in the participation of values of men and women according to the presence of the condition the corresponding explanatory variable represents. Some variables have the same effect on domestic work of men and women, either increasing or decreasing both at the same time. Hence, if there are children under six years of age and the husband works, both spouses have a heavier workload; whereas, if there is a housemaid, both spouses have a lighter workload. It is curious the apparent relation of extra-domestic work of men with their participation in domestic work; it seems as though rather than being complementary activities, where the time devoted to one of them reduces the time of the other, they are parallel activities: as if the man who may be up to the expectations of the role of provider (as he has a job) is more willing to take part in domestic activities, more grueling with his gender and more difficult to accept when he does not have a job.

A different situation is observed in the case of the rest of the dichotomic explanatory variables: while some the same alleviate the load of domestic work of one of the spouses, they increase the load of the counterpart. Thus, we have

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TABLE 1  
DISTRIBUTION OF FREQUENCIES (OR MEANS) OF EXPLANATORY VARIABLES

| Explanatory variables                               | Percentage<br>or mean |
|---|-----------------------|
| <i>Socioeconomic stratum</i>                        |                       |
| Very low (ref)                                      | 31.07%                |
| Low   | 36.81%                |
| Mid   | 18.04%                |
| High (ref)  | 14.08%                |
| Age of the woman (mean)                             | 39.66 years           |
| Age of the man (mean)                               | 43.05 years           |
| Years of schooling of the woman (mean)              | 8.05 years            |
| Years of schooling of the man (mean)                | 7.82 years            |
| Free union  | 18.21%                |
| Number of children (mean)                           | 3.59 children         |
| Years of the union (mean)                           | 18.45                 |
| Children under six                                  | 41.26%                |
| The woman has an extra-domestic job                 | 36.87%                |
| The man does not work                               | 9.76%                 |
| Woman's hours of work a week (extra-domestic)       | 15.86 hours           |
| Men's hours of work a week (extra-domestic)         | 47.03 hours           |
| The woman works at the weekend                      | 17.29%                |
| The man works at the weekend                        | 61.83%                |
| Proportion of the income earned by the woman (mean) | 0.18                  |
| The wife earns more than the husband                | 1.83%                 |
| Domestic work carried out by the woman (index)      | 0.73                  |
| Domestic work carried out by the man (index)        | 0.19                  |
| Woman's power of decision (index)                   | 0.43                  |
| Woman's autonomy (index)                            | 0.54                  |
| Have a housemaid                                    | 2.42%                 |

Source: own calculation based on Endireh.  
NB: all the standardized indexes with values between zero and one.

that women work harder when the couple lives in free union than when it is legal marriage, whereas the converse occurs for men: their participation in domestic work is greater in legal union than in free unions. When the woman has an extra-domestic job, when she works at the weekend and when she earns more than the husband, woman has relative lower participation in domestic work than if either of these activities would not occur; whilst the participation of the husband in domestic work increases under the same condition. In a similar manner, yet in an opposite sense, we observe that if man works at the weekend, he carries out relatively fewer domestic tasks than if he would not work on Saturdays and Sundays, while for the woman this circumstance increases her participation in domestic work.

These 'opposed' effects of the variables on participation in domestic work of men and women seem to verify a vision of complementariness between the work each individual performs inside and outside the household, as well as complementariness between the domestic work carried out by the woman (or the man) and that carried out by their spouse outside and inside the household.

It is noteworthy the differenced effect of the marital status that acts opposite for men and women, which seems to indicate a more solid commitment of women to domestic work in free union; as for men, the most solid commitment occurs in legal marriage.

In any case, all of these relations examined at bi-varied level must be put to the test in a multi-varied model which simultaneously controls the effects of other variables, to find out whether they maintain as such or not.

In table 3 we examine, through variance analysis, the differences observed in participation in domestic work of men and women according to their socio-economic stratum, their power of decision, their autonomy and the ideology of gender roles of women they both hold. Due to space reasons we only present the results of the variance analysis using these four variables as categorical variables, yet in reality we also ran this test for the rest of non-dichotomic variables included in the analysis, nonetheless we did not include the tables here.

We observe in the first place that as the socio-economic stratum increases the general trend is that the participation in domestic work of women decreases (in respect to women in inferior strata), whereas that of men increases. The differences of participation moving from a stratum to another are significant in all of the cases, both for men and women. These results might be partially associated to other variables such as higher education levels and greater

TABLE 2  
DIFFERENCES IN THE AVERAGE VALUE OF DOMESTIC WORK LOAD PERFORMED BY WOMEN AND MEN  
ACCORDING TO DIVERSE VARIABLES (T-TEST)

| Variables                    | Woman's domestic work load | t-test sign | Man's domestic work load | t-test sign |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|-------------|
| Free union                   | 0.7314                     | 0.0000      | 0.1873                   | 0.0339      |
| Lawful marriage              | 0.7245                     |             | 0.1973                   |             |
| There are children < 6       | 0.7477                     | 0.0000      | 0.1986                   | 0.0000      |
| No children < 6              | 0.7097                     |             | 0.1875                   |             |
| Woman does not work          | 0.7301                     | 0.0000      | 0.1633                   | 0.0000      |
| Woman works                  | 0.7176                     |             | 0.2414                   |             |
| Husband does not work        | 0.6953                     | 0.0000      | 0.1754                   | 0.0000      |
| Husband works                | 0.7288                     |             | 0.1939                   |             |
| Woman earns more             | 0.7147                     | 0.0136      | 0.2118                   | 0.0199      |
| Woman does not earn more     | 0.7258                     |             | 0.1918                   |             |
| Woman works at the weekend   | 0.7177                     | 0.0000      | 0.2302                   | 0.0000      |
| Woman does not work weekends | 0.7273                     |             | 0.1841                   |             |
| Man works at the weekend     | 0.7309                     | 0.0000      | 0.1853                   | 0.0000      |
| Man does not work weekends   | 0.7170                     |             | 0.2031                   |             |
| There is a housemaid         | 0.6358                     | 0.0000      | 0.1261                   | 0.0000      |
| There is no housemaid        | 0.7279                     |             | 0.1937                   |             |

Source: own calculations based on data from Endireh 2003.

acquisitive power as one goes up the socio-economic scale, which will be verified (or not) in the multi-varied analysis.

As for relations of power of decision and autonomy of women, the bi-varied results point at a direction not necessarily expected: the higher the levels of decision and the greater autonomy of women, the heavier loads of domestic work taken by them. The differences in participation in domestic work of women are significant among almost all levels of power of decision and autonomy we distinguished, save the change between an intermediate and high level of autonomy, which does not represent a significant difference in women's domestic participation. A possible explanation of this relation is that women with greater power of decision and autonomy declare a heavier load of work than other women since they are aware of the work they do. However, it might be that these women, more empowered, being challenging certain roles of gender in determinate areas of their lives, 'compensate' (consciously or unconsciously) comprehensively fulfilling their roles in areas such as domestic work.

The behavior of men's the participation according to the variations in the power of decision and autonomy of women is not the same in either case. When the power of decision of woman increases, man tends to participate more in domestic work; except when the power of decision of woman is very high, the participation of man in domestic work decreases significantly. All of these differences in domestic work of men according to the four levels of power of decision of women are statistically significant. On its own, when this participation of men is analyzed according to the levels of women's autonomy a less clear behavior is observed: the participation in domestic work is greater when the woman has a very low or intermediate level of autonomy, and when the level of autonomy is low or high (there are no significant differences between very low and intermediate nor are between low and high). It is difficult to imagine a possible explanation for this irregular behavior; in any case, the regression analysis will allow verifying that this factor is significant even if we control it with the rest of the variables.

Finally, when women's domestic participation is analyzed according to their ideology of gender roles, we observe that as women have a more egalitarian ideology, surprisingly, their participation in domestic work increases. There are no differences in the participation in domestic labor of women with a low and intermediate level in this index of ideology. On its own, the participation of men in domestic work increases as the egalitarian ideology of women does, and it is significant when it changes from an intermediate to a high level.

TABLE 3  
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE, COMPARISON OF THE MEAN VALUE OF THE INDEX OF PARTICIPATION IN  
DOMESTIC WORK OF WOMEN AND MEN, ACCORDING TO DIVERSE VARIABLES

| Socioeconomic stratum  | Mean of women's participation | Standard deviation | Mean of men's participation | Standard deviation |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| Very low               | 0.7257                        | 0.0991             | 0.1510                      | 0.1469             |
| Low                    | 0.7354                        | 0.1045             | 0.1896                      | 0.1900             |
| Mid                    | 0.7195                        | 0.1138             | 0.2247                      | 0.2255             |
| High                   | 0.7042                        | 0.1252             | 0.2435                      | 0.2434             |
| <i>Bonferroni test</i> |                               |                    |                             |                    |
| Categories compared    | Difference between means      | Significance       | Difference in means         | Significance       |
| Very low and low       | -0.0097                       | 0.0000             | -0.0386                     | 0.0000             |
| Very low and mid       | 0.0062                        | 0.0003             | -0.0737                     | 0.0000             |
| Very low and high      | 0.0214                        | 0.0000             | -0.0925                     | 0.0000             |
| Low and mid            | 0.0159                        | 0.0000             | -0.0350                     | 0.0000             |
| Low and high           | 0.0311                        | 0.0000             | -0.0539                     | 0.0000             |
| Mid and high           | 0.0153                        | 0.0000             | -0.0189                     | 0.0000             |

Source: own calculations based on data from Endireh 2003.

TABLE 3  
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE, COMPARISON OF THE MEAN VALUE OF THE INDEX OF PARTICIPATION IN  
DOMESTIC WORK OF WOMEN AND MEN, ACCORDING TO DIVERSE VARIABLES (CONTINUATION)

| Woman's power of decision | Women's participation        | Standard deviation | Men's participation          | Standard deviation |
|---------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Very low                  | 0.6974                       | 0.1013             | 0.1657                       | 0.1736             |
| Low                       | 0.7179                       | 0.1042             | 0.1936                       | 0.1951             |
| Mid                       | 0.7499                       | 0.1048             | 0.2096                       | 0.2082             |
| High                      | 0.7644                       | 0.1174             | 0.1356                       | 0.1812             |
| Compared categories       | Difference between the means | Significance       | Difference between the means | Significance       |
| <i>Bonferroni test</i>    |                              |                    |                              |                    |
| Very low and low          | -0.0385                      | 0.0000             | -0.0279                      | 0.0000             |
| Very low and mid          | -0.0705                      | 0.0000             | -0.0439                      | 0.0000             |
| Very low and high         | -0.0850                      | 0.0000             | 0.0301                       | 0.0000             |
| Low and mid               | -0.0320                      | 0.0000             | -0.0160                      | 0.0000             |
| Low and high              | -0.0465                      | 0.0000             | 0.0580                       | 0.0000             |
| Mid and high              | -0.0145                      | 0.0000             | 0.0740                       | 0.0000             |

Source: own calculations based on data from Endireh 2003.

TABLE 3  
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE, COMPARISON OF THE MEAN VALUE OF THE INDEX OF PARTICIPATION IN  
DOMESTIC WORK OF WOMEN AND MEN, ACCORDING TO DIVERSE VARIABLES (CONTINUATION)

| Woman's autonomy       | Women's participation        | Standard deviation | Men's participation          | Standard deviation |
|------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Very low               | 0.7114                       | 0.1053             | 0.2064                       | 0.2155             |
| Low                    | 0.7246                       | 0.1036             | 0.1796                       | 0.1798             |
| Mid                    | 0.7288                       | 0.1096             | 0.2017                       | 0.2035             |
| High                   | 0.7332                       | 0.1169             | 0.1744                       | 0.1993             |
| <i>Bonferroni test</i> |                              |                    |                              |                    |
| Compared categories    | Difference between the means | Significance       | Difference between the means | Significance       |
| Very low and low       | -0.0132                      | 0.000              | 0.0268                       | 0.000              |
| Very low and mid       | -0.0173                      | 0.000              | 0.0047                       | Ns                 |
| Very low and high      | -0.0218                      | 0.000              | 0.0320                       | 0.000              |
| Low and mid            | -0.0042                      | 0.011              | -0.0268                      | 0.000              |
| Low and high           | -0.0086                      | 0.001              | 0.0052                       | Ns                 |
| Mid and high           | -0.0044                      | 0.001              | 0.0272                       | 0.000              |

Source. own calculation based on data from Endireh 2003.

TABLE 3  
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE, COMPARISON OF THE MEAN VALUE OF THE INDEX OF PARTICIPATION IN DOMESTIC WORK OF WOMEN AND MEN, ACCORDING TO DIVERSE VARIABLES (CONTINUATION)

| Ideology of women's gender roles | Women's participation        | Standard deviation | Men's participation          | Standard deviation |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Low                              | 0.7130                       | 0.0848             | 0.133                        | 0.1208             |
| Mid                              | 0.7136                       | 0.1027             | 0.1455                       | 0.1426             |
| High                             | 0.7292                       | 0.1092             | 0.2059                       | 0.2083             |
| <i>Bonferroni test</i>           |                              |                    |                              |                    |
| Compared Categories              | Difference between the means | Significance       | Difference between the means | Significance       |
| Low and mid                      | -0.0006                      | Ns                 | -0.0125                      | Ns                 |
| Low and high                     | -0.0162                      | 0.008              | -0.0729                      | 0.000              |
| Mid and high                     | -0.0156                      | 0.000              | -0.0604                      | 0.000              |

Source: own calculations based on data from Endireh 2003.

## Conditioning factors of domestic work of men and women

If we compare the variance that explains each of the proposed models to explain domestic work performed by men and women (see tables 4a and 4b), we see that for women, model 2 achieves a relatively better explanation (that which incorporates as indicators of extra-domestic work the number of hours of work of men and women); whereas for men, model 1 turns out to be more explanatory (the one which incorporates the direct indicator of economic activity of men and women). Hence, the results of these models will be those which we will basically comment on; nevertheless on occasions we will also refer to results from other models.

The results of the regression analysis suggest some clear findings in respect to the relations between extra-domestic and domestic work of men and women. The level of participation of women in work is directly determined by their participation in labor market, yet not with the condition of men's activity (see table 4a, model 1). A slight reduction in the index of domestic work performed by women who work outside the household is observed, which is 0.06 lower than that of women who do not work outside the household (model 1). The effect of the extra-domestic economic activity of women on their domestic work mainly occurs through the number of hours women work outside the household: per each additional hour of extra-domestic work, the work at the household that is carried out by the woman decreases 0.07 (model 2).

On the contrary, men's participation in domestic work is not related to their own extra-domestic work (table 4b, model 1), as it is with women's extra-domestic work: the value of the index of participation of men in domestic work whose wives work is higher in 0.15 than the participation of men whose wives do not work. Model 2 in table 4b also shows that also the value of domestic participation of men can be modified (reduced) by some characteristics of their own extra-domestic work: as the hours they work are longer and whether they work at the weekend, however it is much stronger the effect than that observed in women's extra-domestic work (not only because of the direct indicator but also because of the hours of the women's extra-domestic work).

This first element of analysis would make an important difference in domestic work of men and women: women's domestic work (the load it represents) is not modifiable (i.e., reducible) by the conditions of the husbands (even if they do not work) whatsoever; but if the case, by the hours women work outside the

household. Men's extra-domestic work is fundamentally a constant, and the amount of domestic work a man can perform might be modified (i.e., increased) by the fact that the woman works outside the household, basically by the number of hours of extra-domestic work: each additional hour of the woman outside the household would increase the value of the participation of men in 0.12 (table 4b, model 2).

If we analyze the effect domestic work carried out by the couple may have on the domestic work performed by men and women, we find that it is indeed a factor that significantly reduces the amount of domestic work carried out by each of them, and in similar proportions for both. In the case of women, each unitary increment in the value of the index of domestic work carried out by men decreases 0.08 the load of work carried out by women (table 4b, model 2), whilst for men there is a reduction of 0.09 in the value of the index of domestic work per unitary increment of women (table 4b, model 1). Nonetheless, it is clear that it is much more significant the reduction that takes place in the loads of domestic work of women and men because of the effect of the presence of a housemaid: if there is one, the value of the index of domestic work performed by the woman decreases 0.19 (table 4a, model 2) and that of man decreases 0.15 (table 4b, model 1). As it is seen, the discharge of work is relatively more important for women than for men, which makes sense, as women are the ones which traditionally carry out most of domestic work and who perform those tasks such as cooking, cleaning, washing, ironing, etc. which are characteristically assumed totally or partially by the housemaid, if there is one present.

In accordance with the obtained results, the socio-economic stratum of the household only has a significant effect on the domestic work women perform, but not form men; and it is only in the case of the high socio-economic stratum where this variable significantly reduces the amount of domestic work carried out by women: in a value of 0.10 (see table 4a, model 2).

Schooling appears as an element that increases the participation in domestic work of men and women. Schooling of women alone has a significant and positive effect: per additional schooling year there would be an increment in the value of the index of domestic work performed by women of 0.07. The schooling of men, as well as that of the wives, affects in a significant and positive manner their participation in domestic work. As a matter of fact, the schooling of the partner has a broader and more significant meaning: each additional year of schooling in the couple increases the participation of men in domestic work in 0.17, whereas their schooling on its own only increases it in 0.04 (table 4b, model 2).

In respect to the role the presence of small children (under 6 years of age) has in the load of domestic work carried out by women and men, a substantial difference in the work the former and the latter carry out is observed. The presence of small children significantly increases the domestic work of women: the level of domestic work is 0.07 higher than when there are not children (table 4a, model 2). This is easy to understand because the care of small children implies new and more tasks in the household; however, the value of domestic work carried by men is not significantly affected by the presence of children, which suggests that the upbringing tasks are not taken on by men.

Another interesting difference the results from regressions show is the effect of the years of the union on the domestic work carried out. In the case of men, their participation in domestic work significantly decreases as the union grows old: each additional year reduces it in 0.12 (table 4b, model 1). In the case of women this variable simply does not affect significantly the load of work. Such a difference seems to be illustrative of the nature of domestic work for men and women: for the former, still an option; for the latter, simply an unavoidable work.

Other important findings state that the ideology of women (more or less subordinate) is not significantly associated with their participation in domestic work; conversely, the fact that women express a more egalitarian gender ideology indeed becomes a factor that fosters the participation of men in domestic work.

As for the effect of the indicators of the empowerment of women on domestic work they and men perform, the results we found are rather suggesting in respect to the nature of domestic work. Out of the indicators of empowerment included into the analysis (power of decision and autonomy of women), only the power of decision evidences a significant effect on the domestic work carried out by women and it is a positive effect, this is to say, it increases in a very important manner the domestic work carried out by women: it increases in 0.22 the value in the index of domestic work per unitary increment of power of decision of women (table 4a, model 2). When we see the effect of the variables of empowerment on the participation of men in domestic work we see a situation apparently different: both a greater power of decision and a greater autonomy of women significantly influence positively and negatively: unitary increments in each of these indexes reduce circa 0.04 the value of the index of domestic work of men (table 4b, model 1).

TABLE 4A  
 LINEAR REGRESSION: WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN DOMESTIC WORK,  
 ENDIREH2003

| Explanatory variables                                | Model 1<br>Beta sig. | Model 2<br>Beta sig. | Model 3<br>Beta sig. |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Very low socioeconomic stratum (ref)                 |                      |                      |                      |
| Low socioeconomic stratum                            | -0.0102              | -0.1100              | -0.0138              |
| Mid socioeconomic stratum                            | -0.0374              | -0.0361              | -0.0415              |
| High socioeconomic stratum                           | -0.0965              | -0.0957              | -0.1030              |
| Woman's age (years)                                  | -0.0719              | -0.0699              | -0.0761              |
| Man's age (years)                                    | 0.0414               | 0.0430               | 0.0389               |
| Woman's schooling years                              | 0.0727 **            | 0.0734 ***           | 0.0675 ***           |
| Man's schooling years                                | -0.0024 *            | -0.0029 *            | 0.0004               |
| Free union   | 0.0094               | -0.0084              | -0.0096              |
| Years of the union                                   | -0.0202 ***          | -0.0200 ***          | -0.0176 ***          |
| Children under six y.o.a                             | 0.0697               | 0.0688               | 0.0719               |
| Woman has an extra domestic job                      | -0.0598 ***          |                      |                      |
| Man does not work                                    | -0.0193              |                      |                      |
| Hours of weekly extra domestic work of woman         |                      | -0.0735 ***          |                      |
| Hours of weekly extra domestic work of man           |                      | 0.0412 ***           |                      |
| Woman works at the weekend                           |                      |                      | -0.0385 ***          |
| Man works at the weekend                             |                      |                      | 0.0154 ***           |
| Woman's decision power (index)                       | 0.2182 *             | 0.2162 *             | 0.2161 *             |
| Woman's autonomy (index)                             | 0.0239               | 0.0224               | 0.0235 *             |
| Ideology of gender roles of women                    | 0.0178 **            | 0.0159 ***           | 0.0161 ***           |
| Participation in domestic work of the spouse (index) | -0.0856 ***          | -0.0826 ***          | -0.0915 ***          |
| There is a housemaid                                 | -0.1894              | -0.1899 ***          | -0.1917 ***          |
| N  | 25949                | 25949                | 25949                |
| R <sup>2</sup>                                       | 0.1427               | 0.1449               | 0.1408               |

\* P < 0.05    \*\* p < 0.01    \*\*\* p < 0.001.

Source: author's own calculation

How are these results to be interpreted? As we already stated in the section of the bi-varied analysis, the fact that women with greater decision report greater participation in domestic work might respond to their wide awareness of the domestic load they take on, so they report a heavier load than those with weaker power of decision. However, it also may be that there are not differences of perception, but real differences in the performed work. The possible explanation we put forward is that as they become empowered, women are challenging the expectations of the gender roles about them; this would generate a sanction from

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TABLE 4B  
LINEAR REGRESSION: MEN'S PARTICIPATION IN DOMESTIC WORK,  
ENDIREH2003

| Explanatory variables                                | Model 1<br>Beta sig. | Model 2<br>Beta sig. | Model 3<br>Beta sig. |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Very low socioeconomic stratum (ref)                 |                      |                      |                      |
| Low socioeconomic stratum                            | -0.0322              | -0.0229              | -0.0183              |
| Mid socioeconomic stratum                            | 0.0009               | 0.0045               | 0.0085               |
| High socioeconomic stratum                           | -0.0257              | -0.0174              | -0.0086              |
| Woman's age (years)                                  | -0.0330              | -0.0320              | -0.0255              |
| Man's age (years)                                    | 0.0588               | 0.0558               | 0.0558               |
| Woman's schooling years                              | 0.1717 ***           | 0.1758 ***           | 0.1830 ***           |
| Man's schooling years                                | 0.0436 *             | 0.0423 *             | 0.0358               |
| Free union   | -0.0179              | -0.0197              | -0.0188              |
| Years of the union                                   | -0.1155 ***          | -0.1195 ***          | -0.1254 ***          |
| Children under six y.o.a.                            | -0.0001              | -0.0034              | -0.0088              |
| Woman has an extra domestic job                      | 0.1534 ***           |                      |                      |
| Man does not work                                    | 0.0295               |                      |                      |
| Hours of weekly extra domestic work of the woman     |                      | 0.1220 ***           |                      |
| Hours of weekly extra domestic work of man           |                      | -0.0665 ***          |                      |
| Woman works at the weekend                           |                      |                      | 0.0720 ***           |
| Man works at the weekend                             |                      |                      | -0.742 ***           |
| Woman's power of decision (index)                    | -0.0369 *            | -0.0312 *            | -0.0266              |
| Woman's autonomy (index)                             | -0.0355 *            | -0.0325              | -0.0347 *            |
| Ideology of gender roles of the woman                | 0.0542 ***           | 0.0617 ***           | 0.0621 ***           |
| Participation in domestic work of the spouse (index) | -0.0888 ***          | -0.0863 ***          | -0.0961 ***          |
| There is a housemaid                                 | -0.1457              | -0.1406 ***          | -0.1391 ***          |
| N  | 25 949               | 25 949               | 25 949               |
| R <sup>2</sup>                                       | 0.1104               | 0.1058               | 0.0979               |

\* P < 0.05    \*\* p < 0.01    \*\*\* p < 0.001.  
Source: author's own calculations.

men that is expressed in their lower participation in domestic work, and from women, as an attempt to soften tensions, or simply as a way to face the lower participation of their spouses by taking on heavier loads of domestic work.

To conclude, the regression analysis verifies a significant and positive relation between a more egalitarian ideology of gender of women and the amount of domestic work that is carried out by men, as for this factor does not significantly affect the domestic work carried out by women.

## Conclusions

Our findings suggest that the participation of men in domestic work becomes a partially independent process, clearly differenced from the domestic work performed by women, members of each gender partake these tasks mainly determined by social prescriptions socially assigned to their gender identity and to a lesser extent as a result of strategies or responses to assume the diverse individual and couple conditions. The element which clearly illustrates this aspect does not come from the regression analysis, but from the mere comparison of the values of the indexes of participation in domestic work of men and women: 0.19 and 0.73, respectively.

To sum up, we can say that the most relevant factors to explain domestic work carried out by women are: their power of decision, as a factor that increases their load of work at the household, and the presence of a housemaid, as a factor that reduces said work.

For men, the most explanatory factors of their participation in domestic work are: schooling age and extra-domestic work of women, as factors that propitiate a greater participation, as well as the presence of a housemaid and the years of the union as factors that decrease said participation.

According to the explanatory models which are identified as most pertinent to explain one and other participations, we can say that the perspective of gender roles is definitely relevant as a explanatory model of the feminine participation in domestic work, being this pertinence evident by means of the always high participation of women in domestic work and by results as the positive effect of a greater power of decision on the domestic work performed. It is also pertinent the theory of free time to explain some variations in the level of participation of women. And definitely, we neither found in this case evidence that supports the proposals of the theory of resources nor the model of gender ideology as explanatory frameworks of the participation of Mexican women in domestic work.

As for domestic participation of men and its most suitable explanatory factors, we found relevant evidence in the theory of the roles of gender (the negative effect of the power of decision and the autonomy of women), and the model of gender ideology (with a positive effect of the more egalitarian ideology of women) as the appropriate model to explain—at least partially—the participation of men in domestic work.

This work has important limitations which have to be mentioned. A first one comes from the fact that we only have information provided by women; this implies that the estimation we make of the domestic work carried out by men is from the perspective of women; besides, we lack indicators on men for some variables, such as the ideology of gender roles. A second limitation is that this analysis does not distinguish between those most feminine tasks and those least feminine that integrate domestic work; although it was not part of the objectives here stated to establish the different nature of the domestic tasks, indubitably this interferes in the disposition of men to take part in a less reluctant manner in some tasks in relation to some others, and such nuance is not approached here.

A third and very important limitation is that we do not have information to build an exogenous indicator of the participation of women in labor market, so the results presented are not exempt from a problem of endogeneity between said indicator and the participation of men and women in domestic work. In previous works we have illustrated how the incorporation of an exogenous indicator might produce utterly different results (Casique, 2000). This suggests the need to be somehow skeptical in respect to the result for this variable in regression analysis and try to ratify it in later analyses and control this possible problem of endogeneity.

Perhaps the most interesting findings of our analysis are probably those that allow us to evidence the relations that are established between, on the one side, the empowerment of women and their gender ideology, and on the other, domestic work they and their husbands carry out. The results apparently contradictory of a negative effect of the power of decision of women on their spouses' domestic work, and at the same time of a positive effect of a less subordinate ideology of women only evidence the very determining part played by the role of gender in the division of domestic work and the complexity inherent to the changes in respect to the traditional roles of women, and the meanings these changes adopt for them and their husbands; going further into a more detailed comprehension of these processes and their relations demands hard work and greater efforts from us in the definition and distinction of the diverse elements which are involved.

## Annex

## Estimation of the general index of participation in domestic work for women

### 1) Estimation of variables of participation of women in five sorts of tasks

a) Participation of women in domestic tasks (n = 32 477).

| Participation in tasks | Percentage of women |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1                      | 1.19                |
| 2                      | 8.59                |
| 3                      | 90.22               |

b) Participation of women in childcare (n = 20 460).

| Participation children | Percentage of women |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1                      | 1.20                |
| 2                      | 8.67                |
| 3                      | 90.22               |

c) Participation of women in care of elderly people (n = 1 144).

| Participation elderly | Percentage of women |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1                     | 2.73                |
| 2                     | 8.81                |
| 3                     | 88.46               |

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d) Participation of women in payments and procedures (n = 15 905).

| Participation procedures | Percentage of women |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| 1                        | 5.12                |
| 2                        | 25.77               |
| 3                        | 69.11               |

e) Participation of women in repairs (n = 15 905).

| Participation repairs | Percentage of women |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1                     | 9.90                |
| 2                     | 33.61               |
| 3                     | 56.49               |

**2) Estimation of the index of partial of work of care and maintenance**

Index of care and maintenance (individual Xi) =  
When takes part in childcare (individual Xi) +  
When takes part in elderly care (individual Xi) +  
When takes part in payments and procedures (individual Xi) +  
When takes part in repairs (individual Xi)  
Mean of women = 3.39

| Level in the index | Percentage of women |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 0                  | 20.41               |
| 1                  | 1.04                |
| 2                  | 7.03                |
| 3                  | 35.99               |
| 4                  | 3.12                |
| 5                  | 7.53                |
| 6                  | 18.05               |
| 7                  | 1.18                |
| 8                  | 1.43                |
| 9                  | 3.99                |
| 10                 | 0.01                |
| 11                 | 0.05                |
| 12                 | 0.18                |

### 3) Estimation of the general index of participation of women in domestic work

General index of participation in domestic work (women) =  
0.65 [(when she takes part in domestic work (woman) (standardized)] +  
0.35 [Indes of cares and maintenance (woman) (standardized)]  
Range of values of the index from 0 to 1  
Mean (women) = 0.73  
Consistence of the index (Cronbach's alpha) = 0.70

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